

INDIANAPOLIS MAYOR'S OFFICE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

FLANNER HOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

October 4, 2006

The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Fourth Year Charter Review (FYCR) is designed to assess the extent to which a school is meeting the standards for renewal at the mid-point of its charter term. The FYCR Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as to school-based goals.

Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:

1. Is the educational program a success?

- 1.1. Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?
- 1.2. Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?
- 1.3. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?
- 1.4. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

2. Is the organization effective and well-run?

- 2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?
- 2.2. Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?
- 2.3. Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?
- 2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?
- 2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?
- 2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?

3. Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?

- 3.1. Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational structure and governance obligations?
- 3.2. Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning?
- 3.3. Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?
- 3.4. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with special needs?
- 3.5. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?

4. Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

- 4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?
- 4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?
- 4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?
- 4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?
- 4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?
- 4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?
- 4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?
- 4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?

COMPLETION OF THE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Mayor's Office engaged SchoolWorks to conduct site visits of schools in their fourth year of operation. The purpose was to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. The FYCR site visit used multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection began before the visit with the review of key documents and continued on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with a number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visit team were used to celebrate what the school does well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. The site visit team's task was to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the FYCR Protocol: Core Question 4 and all of its sub-questions (4.1-4.8), sub-question 2.3 and sub-question 2.5.

Responses to Core Question 1 and all of its sub-questions (1.1-1.4), Core Question 3 and all of its sub-questions (3.1-3.5), and sub-questions 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 were completed by the Mayor's Office.

The school received a written report of the FYCR that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators¹ developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

Does not meet standard

Approaching standard

Meets standard

Exceeds standard

Note: In the case of the sub-questions under **Core Question 3** and **Core Question 4** of the *Performance Framework*, there is no rating for *Exceeds standard*. *Meets standard* is the highest possible rating.

¹ Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the Mayor's Office.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FLANNER HOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success?	FINDING
1.1. Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?	Exceeds Standard
1.2. Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?	Approaching Standard
1.3. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?	Not Evaluated¹
1.4. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?	Not Applicable²
Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?	FINDING
2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?	Meets Standard
2.2. Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?	Approaching Standard
2.3. Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?	Approaching Standard
2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?	Exceeds Standard
2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	Meets Standard
2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?	Not Applicable³
Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?	FINDING
3.1. Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational structure and governance obligations?	Meets Standard
3.2. Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning?	Meets Standard
3.3. Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?	Meets Standard
3.4. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with special needs?	Does Not Meet Standard
3.5. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	Not Applicable⁴

¹ The school was not evaluated in comparison to schools students would have otherwise attended.

² The school did not have school-specific educational goals that were evaluated for the FYCR.

³ The school did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated for the FYCR.

⁴ This sub-question is not applicable because the school did not have English as a Second Language students enrolled.

Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?	<i>FINDING</i>
4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	Approaching Standard
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Approaching Standard
4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?	Not Applicable¹
4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	Meets Standard
4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	Approaching Standard
4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	Meets Standard
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	Meets Standard
4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	Meets Standard

¹ This sub-question is not applicable to the school because the school does not serve secondary students.

FINDINGS, INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE

FLANNER HOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success?

1.1. Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress (AYP), as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?	
Does not meet standard	School has met AYP in less than half of student subgroups for the last two consecutive years.
Approaching standard	School has met AYP in more than half of student subgroups for one of the last two years.
Meets standard	School has met AYP across all student subgroups for the last two years.
Exceeds standard	School has exceeded the AYP target in all student subgroups in at least one of the last two years.

Exceeds Standard. Flanner House Elementary School achieved AYP toward statewide academic goals set by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) in both 2004 and 2005. Student performance exceeded the statewide targets each year on both English and Mathematics tests school-wide, as well as for the two student subgroups IDOE evaluated.

IDOE determined that Flanner House Elementary School made AYP in fall 2004 on all ten indicators it evaluated: school-wide attendance; school-wide passing rates on the English and Mathematics ISTEP+ exams; ISTEP+ English and Mathematics passing rates for subgroups of African-American students and students who qualified for free and reduced price lunch; and ISTEP+ participation rates school-wide and for each of the two subgroups.

Flanner House Elementary School made AYP in the same ten categories in fall 2005. The school-wide and subgroup passing rates on the ISTEP+ English and Mathematics exams consistently exceeded the AYP targets each year. The high rates of students passing the ISTEP+ allowed the school to achieve AYP without relying on alternate means, such as confidence intervals or safe harbor improvement.

In summary, the school exceeded the IDOE's standard for achieving AYP. It achieved AYP each of the last two years, and exceeded the AYP targets in all student subgroups.

1.2. Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?	
Does not meet standard	Value-added analysis indicates that less than 50% of tested students made sufficient gains.
Approaching standard	Value-added analysis indicates that 50%-74% of tested students made sufficient gains.
Meets standard	Value-added analysis indicates that more than 75%-89% of tested students made sufficient gains.
Exceeds standard	Value-added analysis indicates that at least 90% of tested students made sufficient gains.

Approaching Standard. Analysis of data on fall-to-spring gains over three years revealed that an average of 60% of students achieved sufficient gains to reach proficiency over time. This percentage is approaching the Mayor's standard of at least 75% of students making sufficient gains.

Analysts determined whether each student in the charter school achieved sufficient gains on the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress test to become proficient over time, typically over two years. For each student, analysts projected the student's test scores into the future based on the amount of progress that student made on the test between fall and spring. Analysts then compared that projected score to the score needed to be pass Indiana's ISTEP+ exam at that future time. Finally, analysts calculated the average percentage across all grades (second through eighth where applicable), subjects (reading, math, and language) and years (2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06). The result was a single percentage, which determines the rating for the school according to the rubric above.

The methodology for determining sufficient gains changed between 2003-04 and subsequent years. In 2003-04, analysts determined whether students made sufficient gains to become proficient by the 8th grade. In subsequent years (2004-05 and 2005-06), the Mayor's Office asked analysts to apply a more stringent standard, determining whether students made sufficient gains to become proficient within two years at most (e.g., whether a third grade student made sufficient gains to become proficient by the end of fifth grade.) Because the 2003-04 method allowed students more time to become proficient, the percentage of students achieving sufficient gains will generally have been higher in 2003-04, but a drop in this percentage between 2003-04 and subsequent years does not necessarily indicate a decrease in school performance. A more detailed explanation of the methodology for calculating sufficient gains appears in Supplemental Report #3 of the 2006 Accountability Report on Mayor-Sponsored Schools.

In summary, this school's three year average of 60% places the school in the Approaching Standard category in the Mayor's Performance Framework.

Year	Average Sufficient Gain
2003-2004	81.7%
2004-2005	41.7%
2005-2006	57.7%
Multi-Year Average	60%

1.3. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?	
Does not meet standard	School's overall performance in terms of proficiency and/or growth is generally lower than that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend in each of the last three years.
Approaching standard	School's overall performance in terms of both proficiency and/or growth is generally lower than that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend in two of the last three years.
Meets standard	School's overall performance in terms of both proficiency and/or growth is generally as good as that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend.
Exceeds standard	School's performance consistently outpaces that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend.

Not Evaluated.

1.4. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?	
Does not meet standard	School has clearly not met its school-specific educational goal.
Approaching standard	School is making good progress toward meeting its school-specific educational goal.
Meets standard	School has clearly met its school-specific educational goal.
Exceeds standard	School has clearly exceeded its school-specific educational goal.

Not applicable. Flanner House Elementary School did not have school-specific educational goals that were evaluated for the fourth year review.

Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?

2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents concerns in <u>three or more</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one or two</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement.
Meets standard	The school presents significant concerns in no more than <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement. In addition, if the school presents significant concerns in one area, it has a credible plan for addressing the concern that has been approved by the Mayor's Office.
Exceeds standard	The school demonstrates satisfactory performance in all of the areas listed in previous levels.

Meets Standard. Flanner House Elementary School has demonstrated strong fiscal health over the first four years of its charter term. The school has been audited by the ISBA twice in the first four years of operation – for the period from July 2002 to June 2003 and from July 2003 to June 2005. Each report included an unqualified opinion from the ISBA for the school's financials. Each of the audit reports has outlined several findings related to the school's financial management and accounting systems, none of which were deemed significant. Following each audit, the school demonstrated a willingness to address the findings and improve its financial management systems.

Flanner House Elementary School has established adequate staffing and systems for managing the school's finances. Since it opened, the school has contracted with an outside bookkeeper to establish its accounting system and assist with the school's financial management responsibilities. The school's outside bookkeeper helps the school ensure that it fulfills all of the ISBA's accounting regulations and requirements. The school has identified a primary contact for the outside bookkeeper who communicates regularly with the outside bookkeeper regarding the school's finances. The arrangement has been successful over the last four years in ensuring that the school complies with the ISBA's requirements and that the school's finances have been managed successfully.

Flanner House Elementary School uses two separate systems for budgeting and accounting for actual revenues and expenses. As a result, it has been difficult over the last four years to effectively evaluate the school's success at achieving a balanced budget. The line items on the budget for revenues and expenses do not correspond exactly to the chart of accounts used in the school's accounting system and prescribed by the ISBA. Therefore, any evaluation of the school's budget to actual revenue and expenses is based on estimates rather than an actual report that can be generated from the school's accounting software. This is a clear area for attention for the school. In the 2006-07 school year, the school must ensure that the budget line items for revenues and expenses correspond exactly to the revenue and expense categories in the school's accounting system as prescribed by the ISBA. These changes would allow for a more detailed analysis of the school's success at achieving a balanced budget.

Flanner House Elementary School has created a budget for the next five years of operation. While the budget includes what appear to be realistic revenue and expense projections based on the first four years of operation, the school needs to revise the five year budget to correspond with the revenue and expense categories used in the ISBA chart of accounts. These changes would provide more accurate comparisons between the actual revenues and expenses in the first four years of operation and the revenues and expenses budgeted for the next five years.

Over the past four years, Flanner House Elementary School has fulfilled its financial reporting requirements included in its charter. The school has developed a reporting system that allows the school to meet its reporting deadlines in a timely and accurate manner.

By maintaining current levels of financial compliance, and by ensuring that budgets and revenue and expense reports utilize identical categories for accurate comparisons in the future, the school will continue to experience strong fiscal health, and will improve its financial outlook and forecasts for the future.

2.2. Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?	
Does not meet standard	The school's actual enrollment consistently falls short of target enrollment by <u>10% or more</u> . Student attendance and retention rates are consistently below the school's agreed-upon target rates.
Approaching standard	The school's actual enrollment consistently falls short of target enrollment by <u>1-9%</u> . Student attendance and retention rates are consistently below the school's agreed-upon target rates.
Meets standard	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates are generally at or above the school's agreed-upon target rates.
Exceeds standard	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates consistently exceed the school's agreed-upon target rates.

Approaching Standard. Flanner House Elementary School's actual enrollment was significantly below its target enrollment during the last three school years. The school's annual target enrollments are agreed to in the charter. The following table displays the target enrollment compared with the school's official fall enrollment reported to the IDOE. In fall 2003, the school's official enrollment was 24 students (12.6%) below target enrollment. The school's enrollment was below target enrollment by a greater percentage in both fall 2003 and fall 2004.

School Year	Target Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Percent Below
2003-04	190	166	12.6%
2004-05	244	207	15.2%
2005-06	284	229	19.4%

Source: Fall enrollment reports filed with the IDOE.
Targets are from the school's charter.

Attendance rates at Flanner House Elementary School consistently exceeded the IDOE's target of 95% over the last three years for which data is available. Each year, the average daily attendance at the school exceeded 96%.

School Year	Attendance Rate
2002-03	97.2%
2003-04	97.2%
2004-05	96.3%

Source: IDOE.

No targets have been established for student retention rates for Flanner House Elementary School. Of the 139 students who enrolled when it opened as a charter school in fall 2002, 113 (82%) returned to the school in fall 2003. In fall 2004, the retention rate increased to 91% when 151 of 166 students returned from the prior school year. The school's retention rate between fall 2004 and fall 2005, however, was 66.7%, as considerably fewer students re-enrolled.

Years	Students Enrolled Initial Year	Students Re-enrolled Following Year	Retention Rate
Fall 2002 to Fall 2003	139	114	82.0%
Fall 2003 to Fall 2004	166	151	91.0%
Fall 2004 to Fall 2005	207	138	66.7%

Source: Mayor's Office analysis of official fall enrollment reports filed with the IDOE. Because the official report was not available for fall 2002, the school provided a September 2002 attendance worksheet instead.

In summary, Flanner House Elementary School enrolled significantly fewer students than its target enrollment each of the last three years, but consistently exceeded the state's target for attendance during this time period. In fall 2003 and 2004 the school succeeded in retaining students, but its retention rate dropped considerably in fall 2005. In order to meet this standard, the school will need to meet its enrollment targets, maintain its high levels of success in student attendance, and regain its ability to re-enroll students year-to-year.

2.3. Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?	
Does not meet standard	The school appears to lack clear, consistent, and competent stewardship. The Board lacks the number of members specified in the by-laws; it is not well-balanced in member expertise; there has been consistently high turnover on the Board unrelated to the term limits stipulated in the Board's by-laws; roles and responsibilities of the Board are not clear; it often fails to achieve a quorum.
Approaching standard	Board membership is not complete; there has been some unanticipated turnover on the Board unrelated to the term limits stipulated in the Board's by-laws; it is reasonably well-balanced in member expertise; roles and responsibilities on the Board are reasonably clear; it is difficult to get a quorum; Board subcommittees are somewhat active; the Board is developing its ability to provide clear, consistent and competent stewardship.
Meets standard	The Board's membership collectively contributes a broad skill set and fair representation of the community; Board members are knowledgeable about the school; roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly delineated; Board meetings reflect thoughtful discussion and progress in the consideration of issues; overall, the Board provides consistent and competent stewardship of the school.
Exceeds standard	The Board meets the standard for this sub-question AND: displays exceptional expertise and stewardship, as evidenced by significant Board actions to enhance the school over time.

Approaching Standard. Flanner House Elementary School Board membership has been stable since the school's inception. Board members represent a broad base of expertise and are dedicated to the school's mission. Because of a recent change in the school's leadership structure, the Board has refocused its responsibilities and begun to take a more active role in its governance of the school. These recent changes appear to have enhanced the Board's ability to provide clear, consistent and competent stewardship to the school.

Board membership at Flanner House Elementary School has been stable since the school opened in 2002 and has maintained membership in accordance with the school's by-laws. In addition to the original seven members, the Board has added two additional members. Board members provide the school a range of expertise. In addition to parent and student representatives, Board members bring the following experiences to the governance of the school: a retired executive from a large manufacturing corporation, an attorney, a human resources professional, a retired public school administrator, a real estate executive, a computer programmer and several members who work in the financial sector. Board members indicated that the wide range of experiences they provide support the school's "holistic approach to teaching."

The FYCR site visit team met with five of the Board members. Those Board members who participated in the focus group were knowledgeable about Flanner House Elementary School, the school's needs and their responsibilities as Board members. The Board members described their role as "providing governance," "setting overall policy" and "leading strategic development." A review of minutes from recent Board meetings indicates that the Board engages in thoughtful discussions and is able to make the difficult decisions necessary to move the school forward. For example, the Board – in conjunction with school leadership – recently decided to limit the school's enrollment to grades K-6. This decision is an indication of the Board's commitment to support the school's mission.

The leadership structure at Flanner House Elementary School has recently been reorganized. Simultaneously, the Board has taken on greater responsibility for oversight of school operations and for providing some public relations support. The Board indicated that they now exercise greater oversight responsibility by "keeping a tighter rein" on hiring, more closely reviewing the school's educational

program, as well as maintaining a “stricter stance” on the budget. Although Board sub-committees have always existed, these sub-committees (curriculum, finance, human resources and nominating) have not, until recently, met regularly or functioned in a capacity to serve the school. Both the Board and the school's administration reported that sub-committees are now holding regular meetings.

The FYCR site visit team found that the school's Board is stable in its membership, represents a broad range of skills and experiences and is firmly committed to accomplishing the school's mission. Given the recent restructuring at the school, however, the Board is still in the process of transitioning to a more active role that will allow it to provide more clear and consistent stewardship to the school. It is the FYCR site visit team's judgement that the Board has made significant strides to increase its oversight for the school's betterment. To continue to provide strong governance, the Board should continue efforts as planned to enhance its ability to provide strong and competent oversight.

2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?	
Does not meet standard	Less than 70% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.
Approaching standard	More than 70% but less than 80% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.
Meets standard	More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.
Exceeds standard	At least 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.

Exceeds Standard. Averaged across the last two years, 94% of parents surveyed indicated that they are satisfied overall with Flanner House Elementary School. In spring 2004, the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis administered an anonymous survey to all parents and guardians of students enrolled at the school. Of the parent surveys received, 94% indicated overall satisfaction with the school. That percentage fell one point to 93% in spring 2005.

2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) the leadership has insufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) turnover in leadership has been high and/or damaging to the school; c) roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board are generally unclear; d) the school's leadership does not appear to actively engage in a process of continuous improvement; it has made few mid-course corrections in response to problems.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) the leadership has insufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) turnover in leadership has been high and/or damaging to the school; c) roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board are generally unclear; d) the school's leadership does not appear to actively engage in a process of continuous improvement; it has made few mid-course corrections in response to problems.
Meets standard	The school's leadership a) has sufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) has been sufficiently stable over time; c) has clearly defined roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board; d) actively engages in a process of continuous improvement which has led to some mid-course corrections.
Exceeds standard	The leadership displays exceptional academic and business expertise. Leadership turnover has been manageable and appropriate. Roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board are clear. The leadership has established exemplary processes to engage in continuous improvement which have led to significant enhancements to the school over time.

Meets Standard. In January, the school's administration was restructured, resulting in the elimination of the executive director, business manager and public relations coordinator positions. The school's Director of Education and several remaining administrative staff members have assumed the responsibility for business and human resources tasks. Personnel assuming these roles were part of the Flanner House Elementary School community prior to reorganization. The school's current Director of Education has been with the school since its inception. Although the roles have been realigned and responsibilities increased, business management and academic responsibilities in the school are clearly-defined and well-understood. The Board and administration acknowledge that they are in a transitional period and report that the new structure will be evaluated during the second half of this school year. Any required adjustments will be made prior to the next school year.

Despite the recent changes in the composition of the school's administration, there has been little impact on the school's academic program. In focus groups conducted with teachers, parents and the Board, it was clear that all view the Director of Education as the organizational and academic leader of the school. The Director of Education has utilized a distributive leadership style that relies on the strengths of all personnel in the Flanner House Elementary School community. For example, a small cohort of teachers who are competent in the use of data to inform instruction has been identified. The school's special education teacher (a veteran teacher) assumes some responsibility for instructional oversight. The leadership has been integral in shaping and maintaining a unified educational culture at the school, and helped mitigate any adverse impacts that reorganization could have had on teaching and learning.

2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?	
Does not meet standard	School has clearly not met its school-specific organizational goal.
Approaching standard	School is making good progress toward meeting its school-specific organizational goal.
Meets standard	School has clearly met its school-specific organizational goal.
Exceeds standard	School has clearly exceeded its school-specific organizational goal.

Not applicable. Flanner House Elementary School did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated for the FYCR.

Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?

3.1. Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational and governance obligations?	
Does not meet standard	School presents significant concerns in two or more of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) maintenance of adequate "compliance and governance binder" containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all Board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate Board minutes.
Approaching standard	School presents significant concerns in one of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) maintenance of adequate "compliance and governance binder" containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all Board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate Board minutes
Meets standard	School has substantially completed all of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, including: a) maintenance of adequate "compliance and governance binder" containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all Board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate Board minutes. Any concerns are minor and the school presents a credible plan to address them.

Meets Standard. With a few exceptions, Flanner House Elementary School adequately maintains its compliance binder. While the school had difficulty keeping up with the binder during the administrative transition period, the school implemented a successful strategy to address any shortcomings and made it a priority. The school also documents in a timely manner that background checks are conducted for all board members. The board complies with public access and open door meeting laws by posting notices of board meetings. Minutes provide adequate detail as to board actions and discussions. The format of the minutes does vary from meeting to meeting, however, and the board should ensure that the format is consistent at every meeting.

3.2. Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning?	
Does not meet standard	The facility requires <u>much</u> improvement in order to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Significant health and safety code requirements have not been met AND/OR the school <u>lacks</u> many conditions such as the following: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; adequate maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.
Approaching standard	Significant health and safety code requirements are being met, but the facility needs <u>some</u> improvement in order to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. It <u>partially</u> – but not fully – provides conditions such as the following: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; good maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.
Meets standard	Significant health and safety code requirements are being met AND the facility generally provides a safe environment that is conducive to learning, based on conditions such as: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; good maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.

Meets Standard. Flanner House Elementary School's facility meets all health and safety code requirements, and provides a safe environment conducive to learning. The facility's design, size, maintenance, security, equipment and furniture are all adequate to meet the school's needs. The facility is small, but the school's board made a strategic decision to reduce the number of grade levels offered so that the space would be adequate to serve the students appropriately.

3.3. Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?	
Does not meet standard	The school's enrollment process does not comply with applicable law AND/OR the school exhibits one or both of the following deficiencies a) a substantial number of documented parent complaints suggest that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; b) the school has not engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.
Approaching standard	The school's enrollment process complies with applicable law but exhibits one or both the following deficiencies: a) a substantial number of documented parent complaints suggest that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; b) the school has not engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.
Meets standard	The school's enrollment process complies with applicable law; there are minimal documented parent complaints suggesting that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; AND the school has engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.

Meets Standard. Flanner House Elementary School's admissions and enrollment practices and procedures meet the requirements of Indiana's charter school law. The Mayor's Office has received no complaints from parents regarding the school's enrollment practices, and the school conducts outreach to parents citywide.

The Mayor's Office annually receives copies of Flanner House Elementary School's enrollment policies and marketing plans. In Spring 2006, a researcher at CELL interviewed the Director of Education about the school's enrollment and lottery practices. The policies and CELL's interview show that the school conducts a fair and appropriate enrollment process. The school advertises openings through radio and TV public service announcements that reach the entire city, and distributes flyers at neighborhood events and local community organizations.

In past years, Flanner House Elementary School held admissions lotteries when the number of students who submitted applications exceeded the number of open seats at the school. In spring 2006, the school did not hold an admissions lottery as it could accommodate all the students who applied during the open enrollment period.

3.4. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to special-needs students?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding proper maintenance of special-needs students' files, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve compliance such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences. A school does not meet the standard if any individual education plans have not been updated within the appropriate timeframe.
Approaching standard	The school is <u>not yet completely</u> fulfilling all of its legal obligations proper maintenance of special-needs students' files, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding special-needs students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences.

Does Not Meet Standard. In order to evaluate this question, an outside team of experts trained by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) conducted a file review in September 2006 of the school's special education files. The team's focus was to determine whether the files contained all required components. For example, the team determined if the files contained required documents (e.g. log sheet, parent consent form), documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants, signatures of attendees at case conferences, and the up-to-date Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as well as whether the IEP included all necessary information, such as, measurable annual goals, a statement of how the parent will be informed of the student's progress and the due date of the student's re-evaluation.

The team did not interview parents or evaluate the school's provision of special education services beyond the information included in the special education students' files.

Flanner House Elementary School is not currently meeting the standard established for proper maintenance of special education students' files. None of the student files was in complete compliance with all of the requirements, indicating the school does not have an effective system for implementing IEPs. Files were missing evidence of parental consent for their child to be evaluated, proper notification of case conferences, and documents showing the initiation and durations of IEPs. It was unclear if the necessary participants attended each case conference, and it was also unclear if the school had complied with the reasonable notice requirement for all conferences. Information for students who had transferred from another school also was missing.

The content of the students' IEPs also needs improvement. IEPs lacked adequate descriptions of current educational performance for students, appropriate classroom and ISTEP+ accommodations, and behavior plans for some students. The school must also ensure that re-evaluations are conducted in a timely manner and that goals for all students are updated each year.

In order to improve its special education files, the school should move all files to the new online format called ICAN. The ICAN system is designed to ensure that, when properly completed, all IEPs are in full compliance. The special education coordinator did not demonstrate current knowledge of special education compliance regulations or the ICAN system. The coordinator would benefit from professional development in these areas.

In summary, Flanner House Elementary School should undertake a full review of all special education files and IEPs in order to bring files into compliance and ensure that all students in need of special education services have clear and appropriate goals and accommodations. The school should transfer files as soon as possible to the online ICAN system, and obtain training for the special education coordinator in this area.

3.5. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as a Second Language (ESL) students?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is <u>not yet completely</u> fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Not Applicable. Because Flanner House Elementary School does not have any English as a Second Language students enrolled, this question is not applicable to the school.

Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Approaching Standard. Flanner House Elementary School has a high quality curriculum that is aligned to the Indiana state academic standards. The school has curriculum guides that were developed by the school's Director of Education in collaboration with various colleagues. Teachers reported they work directly from the Indiana state academic standards to determine what they teach on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Lesson plans for classroom instruction reference the standards. In addition, teachers reported using the standards as a checklist to ensure that all required content and skills have been taught and to determine student mastery of the Indiana state academic standards. School staff members uniformly described this practice to the FYCR site visit team.

The school's instructional programs provide the scope and sequence for content presentation. Flanner House Elementary School uses the *Open Court* series for English language arts and the SRA program for mathematics. Use of these programs was in evidence during school-wide classroom observations. In focus groups with the FYCR site visit team, teachers reported that textbooks are used to guide instruction and that the standards are used to ensure content delivery. School staff indicated that *Open Court*, in particular, aligns well with the state standards but that the mathematics program requires more supplementation. The new SRA mathematics series is being piloted at two grade levels to determine if the school wants to continue the use of this program.

In every classroom observed by the FYCR site visit team, there was evidence that textbooks and materials were sufficient to support effective instruction. Several teachers commented directly about the effectiveness of the *Open Court* program for their students, including the range of available materials to support students of varied abilities. For example, poster-size textbooks, a variety of activity materials and

an abundance of posted student work were evident in the school's classrooms. The Director of Education indicated that, this year, she was able to fill every teacher's request for materials to supplement the core programs.

Although individual teachers report they have identified gaps in the school's curriculum by checking alignment with the standards, Flanner House Elementary School has not conducted a school-wide systematic review of the curriculum to identify potential gaps. Teachers use assessments to monitor student achievement and to identify areas in which students performed poorly. Staff reports re-teaching concepts and skills and making other mid-course corrections based upon student performance. For example, school leadership and teachers identified the need for a new mathematics program because they were dissatisfied with student achievement results on the mathematics portion of the ISTEP+. While this may appear to be sufficient in a school this size, without systematic analyses of curriculum gaps across grade levels and content areas, it is difficult to know for certain if gaps in student performance are a result of the curriculum or other related factors (i.e., instruction).

Because Flanner House Elementary School has not conducted a systematic review of its curriculum, the school is approaching the standard in this area. The delivery of instruction is prescribed by the scope and sequence of the school's instructional programs and teachers use the Indiana state academic standards to ensure content areas are covered across subject areas. It is likely that a systematic, school-wide analysis of documents and programs used to deliver instruction across grade levels and subject areas will assist the school in formalizing its curriculum and identifying skills or content areas that require greater attention.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

Approaching Standard. As previously indicated in response to sub-question 4.1, the written curriculum at Flanner House Elementary School is uniformly understood by all staff. Classroom observations conducted by the FYCR site visit team indicated that teachers also deliver the curriculum in a consistent and appropriate manner and in accordance with the state standards. Teachers use instructional programs as the vehicle for delivering instruction. This was evident through a review of lesson plans, as well as observations of classroom practices. Although lesson objectives and/or Indiana state academic standards

were not consistently posted across classrooms, the FYCR review team noted that classroom activities were clearly designed around and focused on core learning objectives. The Director of Education indicated that teachers have flexibility in implementing classroom lessons, “as long as they are meeting the standards.”

The rigor and pace of instruction is appropriate in most Flanner House Elementary School classrooms. The FYCR site visit team defined classrooms with appropriate pace and rigor as those that encompassed more frequent use of questions to check for understanding, a range of higher-order questions and content that presented challenge for the students. These same classrooms contained appropriate pacing and were marked by smooth transitions between activities and high rates of student engagement in the learning activity – all of which maximized the use of instructional time. Of the 13 classrooms visited, the FYCR team noted student engagement at a rate of 90% or greater in 10 classrooms for the duration of the observation. Seamless transitions between activities – for example, from whole group discussion to small group work – contributed to the appropriate pace in most classrooms observed. The delivery of the content in most observed classes was appropriately rigorous for the grade level of the class. The use of questions to check for understanding (e.g., “What does that mean?”) was observed in most classrooms. Other teachers were observed requiring all students to raise their hands when they completed a problem or to “hold up your answer on a piece of paper” to check for understanding. Higher-order questions, which present greater challenge to students and extend learning opportunities for more advanced students, were observed in use in some classrooms. Higher-order questions are defined as those that ask students to predict, evaluate and synthesize content. The following are examples of higher-order questions used in classrooms. “What do you think will happen next [in the story]?” “Why are [skills] important?” “Who can interpret what this information means?”

Teachers at the school employ a variety of learning activities, teaching strategies and methods of delivering instruction to ensure that the learning needs of all students are met. Across 13 classroom observations (approximately 30 minutes each), the FYCR site visit team observed varied modes of instruction, including: teacher-led, student-led, small group and independent work. Teacher-led direct instruction, for the purposes of introducing a lesson and/or for content based instruction, was observed in all classrooms. In 5 out of 13 classrooms, the FYCR site visit team noted student-led instruction (i.e., students documenting and explaining a response to a mathematics problem); small group work in 7 out of 13 classrooms (e.g., center-based activities, common group tasks); and independent work in 6 out of 13 classrooms (e.g., completing an assignment). The use of varied instructional modes allows students with different learning styles greater access to instructional content.

In addition, Flanner House Elementary School makes use of cross-disciplinary lessons and project-based learning, which is designed to appeal to a wide range of student interests and abilities. SRA provides planning guides to incorporate cross-subject learning into classroom lessons – for example, incorporating science or art into an English language arts lesson. The school’s teachers shared these guides with the FYCR site visit team. Most teachers report that these guides are useful in designing cross-disciplinary lessons. In addition, the school maintains a relationship with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, which has provided a rich context for incorporating multidisciplinary strategies into classroom instruction, as well as providing a source of professional development in differentiating instruction, according to members of the faculty. Teachers and administrators spoke very highly of the program, stating it is “excellent” and “wonderful.” Finally, quarterly projects are a requirement at the school for all students from kindergarten through seventh grade. These projects are intended to support the school’s mission of

developing the “whole child” by allowing students to explore their own specific interests. Projects are also used to ensure parental involvement in the education of the school’s students. A focus group conducted with parents indicated their support for project-based work. One parent stated, “It is quality time spent with the child.” Each of these initiatives is evidence of the school’s successful efforts to engage student and parental interest in varied learning activities and to increase the depth of learning at the school.

Although teachers receive some feedback on classroom practices, there is not a systematic process in place at Flanner House Elementary School to oversee and monitor the quality of instruction. The Director of Education provides each new teacher with a formal evaluation at the end of the school year and more experienced teachers with a formal evaluation at least every other year. Additionally, the Director of Education and the coordinator of special education reported visiting classrooms on a frequent basis and providing some feedback to teachers as a result of these informal observations. This was corroborated by teachers. The school’s staff indicates that the feedback they are provided is “sufficient” and always “supportive” but that it most often focused on student behavior, engagement or other aspects of the learning culture. While these are important aspects of school-based practice, this type of feedback is not adequate to improve instruction. New teachers feel supported by colleagues and report frequent communications, especially at grade level. However, this process has not been systematized to ensure that school-wide instruction is moving forward in a consistent direction and with the same quality. As the school continues to plan for the future, a more rigorous system of instructional oversight with appropriate feedback would foster and support teacher and instructional development. The school should consider focusing instructional feedback on targeted areas for instructional improvement to enhance school-wide teaching practices and to further improve student performance.

4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Meets standard	The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.

Not Applicable. This sub-question is not applicable to Flanner House Elementary School because the school does not serve secondary students.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Meets standard	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

Meets Standard. Flanner House Elementary School effectively uses learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction. The standardized assessments the school uses provide the staff accurate and useful information on student performance. The school uses the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), TerraNova and ISTEP+ assessments to measure student performance. These standardized assessments provide both norm-referenced (NWEA MAP, TerraNova) and criterion-referenced (ISTEP+) assessment data. Norm-referenced tests provide the school a basis to compare student performance with other students locally and nationally, and enables the school to assess learning growth over time. Teachers did not report widespread use of data from standardized tests, although they are aware of these assessments and knowledgeable about the performance of students in their classrooms across content areas. As previously noted, the student performance on the mathematics section of the ISTEP+ caused the school to seek out a new mathematics program. In focus groups conducted with the FYCR site visit team, several teachers reported that they would like to learn more about the use of this data to inform their instructional decisions.

Classroom assessments at Flanner House Elementary School provide frequent and timely feedback to teachers. Teachers reported on their use of their own teacher-developed assessments or assessments that are included with the instructional programs in each subject area. Regular use of classroom assessments provides information to teachers that are used to inform instructional decisions. Teachers reported using data from classroom assessments to determine if students had mastered the skills or concepts of the lesson, to group students for instructional activities and to modify the pace and content of lessons.

The school also uses teacher-developed benchmarks and quarterly report cards based on the Indiana state academic standards to measure student performance. The Director of Education reported that teachers have individually developed benchmarks aligned to the standards. Teachers reported working together in grade-level teams over the summer to develop written benchmarks that are used to measure student

mastery of content, in alignment with the standards. Teachers also reported using these benchmarks to monitor the scope, sequence and pace of instruction. Interviews with teachers indicated that most actively use benchmarks to monitor progress.

The student report card at Flanner House Elementary School is also based on the Indiana state academic standards. Student report cards at each grade level cite the specific content strands. For example, a grade five report listed Standard 5.1.1, "Reads aloud grade level text," as one measure of student achievement. Report cards reviewed by the FYCR site visit team from other grade levels showed the similar close ties to the standards. This is one way the school ensures that student performance is closely aligned with state expectations.

Teachers use the results of frequent and varied classroom assessments to guide and adjust instruction. Teachers report that when classroom assessments show that students failed to master the standard during the initial presentation of content, they re-teach the concepts and skills. Teachers also use classroom assessment results to divide the students into leveled learning groups, specifically during center-based activities. This allows teachers the opportunity to work more closely with students who are struggling. In addition, teachers report that classroom assessments are used to identify students who are achieving at higher levels. It is a uniform practice at the school to provide enrichment activities to students who require greater challenge.

Flanner House Elementary School uses a range of assessments to monitor student performance and inform instruction. This includes the use of local benchmarks and report cards aligned with the Indiana state academic standards. These practices meet the standard for sound practices. Moving forward, it may benefit the school to provide training to increase staff members' competency in analyzing standardized assessment information to further inform curriculum and instructional decisions.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

Approaching Standard. Flanner House Elementary School has a rigorous teacher hiring process. The process includes the participation of members of the teaching staff and the Board. The Director of Education conducts the initial interview to ensure that new applicants will be a good fit for the school's culture. In the second phase, applicants are interviewed by a committee that includes a selection of teachers. Candidates are then asked to conduct a demonstration classroom lesson. Not only do teachers and school leaders provide input on the lesson quality, but students are also asked to give their opinion of the interviewee's teaching skills. The involvement of the teaching staff in the hiring process contributes greatly to the strong sense of community and ownership across the school. This also provides a vested interest for staff in helping new teachers succeed. The hiring of new teachers at the school requires Board approval.

The entire teaching staff at Flanner House Elementary School currently meets state certification guidelines. Three teachers who currently hold emergency certificates have been asked to complete the required coursework and/or training programs in accordance with state regulations, will enable them to continue teaching at the school. The Director of Education reports keeping "a close eye on all teacher certification status," and is prepared to dismiss staff members who do not maintain appropriate certification. The Board corroborated the importance of teachers meeting state certification requirements and indicated that they will support recommendations by the Director of Education for termination, based upon lapsed certification.

According to both the Director of Education and members of the teaching staff, there is a regular schedule for teacher evaluations. The formal evaluation form lists 26 different criteria under four main sections: Personal Characteristics, Personal Qualifications, Classroom Management and Human Relations, as well as a space for three goals jointly selected by the teacher and the Director of Education. Teachers are provided a copy of the form at the beginning of the year to ensure that they understand the evaluation

criteria. The FYCR site visit team noted that most of the categories for evaluation reinforce the culture of the school and the importance of the “whole person.” However, only two of the 26 criteria listed on the evaluation form are directly related to the clinical aspects of classroom instruction.

Professional development activities at Flanner House Elementary School reflect the school's mission. Staff has been involved in ongoing professional development activities provided through a partnership with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Trainings have assisted staff in better understanding different student learning styles, as well as methods to address these differences through varied activities, use of manipulatives and cross-disciplinary lessons. All staff members currently participate in a professional development activity to increase understanding of middle-class teachers who work with students from disadvantaged and/or culturally diverse backgrounds. The Director of Education reported that this group training activity was selected (and required) for all staff to continue to promote positive interactions throughout the school. Teachers spoke positively of these training initiatives, indicating that each will help them to better meet the needs of their students.

Some professional development that is focused on teaching and learning has been provided at Flanner House Elementary School, but it is not based on an analysis of training needs. Prior to the beginning of the school year, teachers participated in a two-day *Open Court* training, which was described as “useful.” Some staff also reported that training was conducted on the use of student assessment information to guide instructional decisions. However, these activities were not determined through an assessment of student attainment and improvement. The Director of Education reported that the school has a teacher professional development committee that makes recommendations for training activities. Teachers reported that they have “some input” into professional development. The Professional Development Calendar provided to the FYCR site visit team identified dates for staff meetings and possible trainings, but did not identify a specific list of topics to be covered.

In summary, the human resource systems at Flanner House Elementary School have many sound aspects, including a rigorous hiring process, consistently implemented evaluation procedures and certified teachers. Professional development that supports the school's mission is occurring. Targeted professional development based on an analysis of teaching and learning needs, however, is not in place at the school. As the school identifies areas for improvement that are specific to curriculum implementation and/or instructional practices, professional development activities should be designed to support these initiatives.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.

Meets Standard. Flanner House Elementary School's mission is acknowledged and shared by all stakeholders. The commitment to accomplishing the mission is evident in the implementation of many of the school's programs. All stakeholders clearly understand and support the school's mission, which the school defines as follows:

Flanner House Elementary School's mission is to develop the highest potential of its students through educating the "whole person," ensuring that all students attain basic skills proficiency appropriate to their age and grade level. By fostering critical thinking and problem solving skills, we seek to build a solid foundation and provide positive motivation for life-long learning.

Board members, teachers, parents and students echoed the Director of Education's stated emphasis on teaching the "whole person." When asked what the mission of the school was, teachers stated: "All children can learn" and "It is our responsibility to make sure that all children learn." All teachers at the school could summarize the school's mission. Parents also indicated that the school's mission was to "educate the whole child" and "to get [students] to a level of excellence." In addition, parents conveyed that teachers have a caring attitude toward their children and concern about the "whole person." Parents relayed multiple examples to the FYCR site visit team of teacher attendance in non-school activities to support this sentiment. Students also understood the school's emphasis on teaching the whole child, stating: "Teachers care about us" and "They [school staff and leadership] treat us like family." Other students stated, "We get more personal attention here than we would get in [other schools]."

Many initiatives at Flanner House Elementary School further demonstrate the school's commitment to the mission of teaching the whole child. Students begin each day at school with the recitation of the school's "PRIDE (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Excellence) Pledge." Teachers at the school teach all subjects to all students, further emphasizing the school's commitment to teaching the whole child. The school's partnership with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is another example of a unique program that the school sought out and that fully supports its efforts to reach every child. The integration of the curriculum through multidisciplinary lessons is yet another example of a purposefully designed program to reach each child. A further example is the project-based learning initiative in which each child – kindergarten through grade 7, working with their parents or guardians – is required to complete four out-of-school projects during the school year. In both word and deed, Flanner House Elementary School is truly committed to teaching the whole child.

Moreover, the school's emphasis on teaching the whole person is also demonstrated on the student report cards, which include evaluations in "Skills and Behaviors that Support Learning." The upper-level report cards list "working cooperatively, accepting responsibility, and demonstrating consistent effort" as student performance areas to be evaluated. At the lower levels, teamwork, cooperation and responsibility are assessed. Teacher evaluations at the school also focus on aspects of a teacher's performance that contribute to the school's mission. Teachers are evaluated on elements such as "self confidence," "respect" and "understanding of family situations."

In summary, the school's mission is well known and evident in every part of the school community. There is clear evidence to indicate that the school meets the standard in this area.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

Meets Standard. The school climate at Flanner House Elementary School is conducive to student and staff success. The school community has purposefully designed a climate and culture for learning, which is evident in many of the school's programs and initiatives. Professional development activities have focused on helping teachers better understand the challenges of students from different economic and cultural backgrounds. Each morning, students and staff recite the school pledge to remind students of the importance of high expectations, character and, further, the need to adhere to these standards each day. Positive student behaviors are rewarded with PRIDE tickets, which the FYCR site visit team observed teachers distributing during classroom lessons. A randomly-selected subset of students who received PRIDE tickets during the week are recognized during the weekly assembly. These students are presented a prize and a certificate, acknowledging their positive behaviors. The school has a character education program that presents a positive character trait each month. These traits are reinforced in the weekly assembly, on various postings throughout the school and through classroom discussions and student projects.

Another prominent factor that contributes to the positive learning culture at Flanner House Elementary School is the close tie between the home and the school. The Director of Education indicated that "Everyone knows the children personally." The parents concurred with this assessment. One parent stated, "Everyone here really cares about the kids." All parents at the school are required to volunteer for a minimum of 20 hours during each school year. During focus group interviews with parents, the FYCR site team noted the obvious pride of parents as they relayed the various volunteer efforts in which they had been involved. Parents also spoke highly of the quarterly projects that they complete with their children – another example of parental involvement at the school. Extensive parent participation in the school's learning activities further reinforce the culture that has been built at the school.

Student behavior at Flanner House Elementary School is not a problem. During the three days the FYCR review team spent in the school, there were no instances of student misbehavior observed. When questioned about student behavior at the school, administrators, teachers and parents all responded in one

voice, "Student behavior is not an issue here." Parents stated that the Director of Education "Runs a tight ship." The Director of Education agreed with this assessment. When teachers were asked about student behavior problems at the school, the most prominent response was "talking." Across focus groups and interviews conducted by the FYCR site visit team, teachers could not recall any serious discipline situations that have occurred at the school.

The positive school climate is also reflected in the supportive interactions, respect and caring attitude demonstrated throughout the school. During classroom observations, the team witnessed students standing as adults entered the room. The FYCR site visit team members were greeted by a Flanner House Elementary School student upon entering each classroom. Students held the door for adults entering and leaving the room and stood in unison to recite responses to teachers' questions. Parents relayed a range of positive experiences to the FYCR site visit team that were all attributed to the manner in which everyone – students, staff and parents – were treated at the school. As stated by one parent, "[students] can't wait to get here." Focus groups conducted with students also revealed extensive support for the climate and culture at the school. Students stated, "Teachers really care about us as people," "They [teachers] are always willing to help them," "Teachers don't criticize me if I get something wrong; they help me."

The climate at Flanner House Elementary School is conducive to student and staff success. There are many initiatives in place at the school that have purposefully provided the school's students with an environment that is designed for learning – both in academics and as a whole person.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

Meets Standard. Ongoing, meaningful communications are part of the culture at Flanner House Elementary School. School leaders and teachers report almost daily communication with most parents. Although not required, nearly all parents choose to pick up and drop off their children at school. This is a common vehicle for teacher-parent communications. School staff indicated, and parents corroborated, that there are frequent phone calls and email communications: "Teachers are always available and willing to spend time with any parent who has a concern about their child." Teachers send home weekly folders with

student achievement information and classroom updates. School activities are communicated to students through morning announcements and weekly newsletters. Parents reported that the Director of Education has instilled an open door policy at the school. As stated by one parent, "I feel like I am with family when I am here." At the time of the FYCR site visit, 100% of the school's parents had completed and returned survey documents. The required parent volunteer hours and participation in quarterly projects are additional examples of how parents at the school are active participants in the educational program.

There are systems in place at Flanner House Elementary School to communicate with parents about student academic progress. Parents report receiving ISTEP+ reports and student results on the classroom assessments (in the weekly folders) on a regular basis. Parents are required to sign and return folders to ensure that they have received and understand the information. Parents are required to attend quarterly conferences at the school in order to receive their child's report card. The Director of Education reported, and teachers confirmed, "100% attendance" at the quarterly conferences.

Communications are clear, helpful and an integral part of Flanner House Elementary School's culture. Parents are active participants in the school's program. The communication network provided by the school meets the standard.

APPENDIX A

FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW SITE VISIT TEAM

The Fourth Year Charter Review site visit to Flanner House Elementary School was conducted on April 18-20, 2006 by a team of educators from SchoolWorks LLC.

Megan Tupa, Team Leader, Project Manager, SchoolWorks, LLC

Dr. Dennis McKnight, Team Member, Consultant, SchoolWorks, LLC